

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 08512 110744Z

21

ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SR-02 ORM-01 SCA-01 VO-03 A-01 OPR-02 AID-20 IGA-01

SSO-00 NSCE-00 INSE-00 /097 W
----- 093595

R 110640Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4042

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

USUN NEW YORK 1471

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 8512

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, VN, CB, TH, CGEN, CVIS

SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND:
THEIR PLIGHT AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF WORKING
THROUGH THE UNHCR

REF: A) BANGKOK 8456

B) BANGKOK 6798

C) BANGKOK 8174

D) BANGKOK 7180

E) BANGKOK 6963

F) BANGKOK 6779

G) BANGKOK 6615

H) STATE 107283

I) STATE 108703

SUMMARY. EMBASSY OFFICIALS MET WITH KADRY, THE REGIONAL
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNHCR, ON THE MORNING OF MAY 9, AND
REPORTED IN REFTEL A THAT HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE RTG'S
RESPONSE. OUR OWN DISCUSSIONS WITH RTG OFFICIALS SINCE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 08512 110744Z

THEN INDICATE THAT KADRY'S ENCOURAGEMENT WAS ILL FOUNDED.

EXPERIENCE TO DATE AND THESE LATER CONVERSATIONS DEMONSTRATE THE DIFFICULTY AND SLOWNESS OF WORKING IN THAILAND THROUGH THE UNHCR AT A TIME WHEN SPEED AND SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN RELIEVING THE PHYSICAL DISTRESS AND ANXIETY OF REFUGEES IS NEEDED. WE HOPE THE INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY WILL BEGIN TO WORK RAPIDLY OR THAT MORE REFUGEES IN THAILAND CAN BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE 150,000 AUTHORIZED PAROLES FOR VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN REFUGEES. END SUMMARY.

1. KADRY, THE UNHCR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, TOLD EMBASSY OFFICIALS ON MAY 9 THAT HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY HIS DISCUSSION WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) OFFICIAL, AND THAT MFA WOULD COOPERATE IN HELPING UNHCR OFFICIALS COMMUNICATE WITH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES NOW BEING HELD ON BOATS AND BEING PREVENTED FROM LANDING BY THE RTG (REFTEL A).

2. AFTER THAT CONVERSATION, AN EMBASSY OFFICER SPOKE WITH AN OFFICIAL OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR (MOI), WHICH ALONG WITH THE THAI MILITARY, ARE THE OPERATIVE RTG ORGANIZATIONS COPING WITH THE SOME 7,000 OR MORE RECENTLY ARRIVED REFUGEES. (THIS DOES NOT COUNT THE 4,000 VIETNAMESE AND 1,000 CAMBODIANS WHO HAVE ALREADY PASSED THROUGH THAILAND.) THE MOI OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE RTG HAD NO INTENTION OF LETTING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES OFF THEIR BOATS AND WOULD ONLY PROVIDE THEM RICE AND GASOLINE TO LEAVE THAI WATERS. HE REITERATED THE RTG POSITION THAT REFUGEES ARE NOT TO BE PERMITTED TO LAND IN THAILAND UNLESS THEIR TRANSIT IS GUARANTEED TO ANOTHER COUNTRY, AND THE RTG'S POLICY THAT REFUGEES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN THAILAND. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT NO REFUGEES WOULD BE SENT BACK TO CAMBODIA OR VIETNAM IF IT WAS CERTAIN TO ENDANGER THEM. HIS VIEW WOULD BE THAT FEW WOULD FALL INTO THIS CATEGORY.

3. AS REPORTED IN REFTEL B, THE RTG REALLY WANTS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE UNHCR. THE RTG BELIEVES THE UNHCR AND THE CONVENTION ON REFUGEES ARE NOT APPLICABLE TO THAILAND AND THAT "WESTERNERS" ARE TRYING TO IMPOSE ON THEM A FORMULA DERIVED FROM AND SUITABLE FOR POST WORLD WAR II EUROPE, BUT NOT FOR ASIA WITH ITS OFTEN POORLY CONTROLLED AND POROUS BORDERS. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 08512 110744Z

WHAT ACCEPTANCE THE RTG HAS GIVEN THE UNHCR, SUCH AS PERMITTING KADRY TO CALL AT MFA, HAS RESULTED FROM EMBASSY URGINGS.

4. THERE ARE IN THAILAND SOME 1,800 OR MORE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, OF WHOM ABOUT 1,500 ARE PERSONS WHO SET OUT FROM VIETNAM ON BOATS, FULLY EXPECTING TO BE PICKED UP BY AMERICAN VESSELS AND TAKEN TO THE U.S. THESE DESPERATE PEOPLE, INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN, HAVE ENDURED A SEA JOURNEY IN

SMALL, OVER-CROWDED BOATS, ARE PENNILESS, ARE BEING TOLD THEY CANNOT STAY IN THAILAND, AND HAVE NO PLACE TO GO.

5. NEARLY ALL VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN THAILAND ARRIVED BELIEVING THE USG WOULD PROVIDE THEM TRANSPORTATION, PERMIT ENTRY, AND EVEN FIND THEM JOBS IN THE U.S. IN ADDITION TO HEARING THIS VIEW EXPRESSED BY HUNDREDS OF WALK-IN APPLICANTS, THE EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED NUMEROUS LETTERS AND PETITIONS ATTESTING TO THIS BELIEF. THE RTG ASKED THE EMBASSY ON MAY 8, IN FACT, IF IT WOULD DETAIL AMERICAN OFFICERS TO GO TO SITES WHERE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE BOATS HAVE LANDED, MANY OF WHICH ARE DISTANT AND REMOTE, TO INFORM VIETNAMESE THAT THE USG CANNOT ACCEPT BLANKET RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CARE AND ONWARD MOVEMENT TO THE U.S. THE RTG OFFICIAL SAID THE VIETNAMESE WOULD NOT BELIEVE THAI OFFICIALS AND DEMANDED TO SPEAK WITH AN AMERICAN EMBASSY OFFICER.

6. THE MISSION HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES THROUGH THAILAND. 4,000 VIETNAMESE TRANSITED THAILAND ENROUTE TO GUAM AND A 1,000 KHMER WERE CARED FOR DURING A MONTHS WAIT, AND WERE FULLY PROCESSED WITH I-94'S, MEDICALS AND TENTATIVE VOLAG ASSIGNMENT BEFORE BEING AIR-LIFTED DIRECTLY TO THE U.S. WE ARE BEGINNING PROCESSING ON A SECOND TRANCH OF SOME 1,200 CAMBODIANS. FOR THE REMAINING 1,800 VIETNAMESE AND 3,500 CAMBODIANS, THE PRESENT AND FUTURE LOOKS GRIM. THIS IS ESPECIALLY SO FOR VIETNAMESE WHO ARE BEING KEPT ON THEIR BOATS AND FOR CAMBODIANS WHO ARE BEING HELD IN CAMPS ALONG THE BORDER BY THE RTG.

7. FOR THOSE REFUGEES WHO ARE NOT CONFINED TO CAMPS OR BOATS AND WHO CAN REACH THE EMBASSY, WE ARE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENTAL GUIDANCE, TELLING THEM THAT PRIOR TO OUR CONSIDERING THEM FOR PAROLE THAT THEY MUST DOCUMENT THAT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BANGKO 08512 110744Z

THEY HAVE MADE UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO REMAIN IN THAILAND OR GAIN ENTRY TO ANOTHER COUNTRY. THEY ARE TOLD THAT THEY SHOULD TRY TO ATTAIN RESETTLEMENT IN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN THE UNITED STATES THROUGH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNHCR, ICEM AND THE ICRC, AND THROUGH APPLICATIONS TO OTHER EMBASSIES.

8. THE UNHCR OFFICE TAKES DOWN PEOPLES NAMES AND KEEPS GENEVA INFORMED. THE ROC EMBASSY HAS BEEN HELPFUL IN ASSISTING VIETNAMESE WHO HAVE A DROP OF CHINESE BLOOD. WE KEEP READING IN OUR CABLES THAT OTHER NATIONS ARE CONSIDERING ACCEPTING REFUGEES BUT THUS FAR THEIR INTENT IS NOT BEING TRANSLATED INTO VIGOROUS ACTION IN THAILAND. THE CANADIANS HAVE DISPATCHED AN IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL HERE, BUT LIKE OTHER EMBASSIES, ENTRY STANDARDS REMAIN RIGOROUS. THE FRENCH ARE STILL REFERRING ALL CASES TO PARIS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL.

9. REFUGEES ARE MOVING ON. AS STATED WE ARE COMMENCING PROCESSING ON ANOTHER 1,200, IN ADDITION TO THE 5,000 VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN REFUGEES WE HAVE ALREADY ASSISTED. HOPEFULLY, THE INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY WILL RAPIDLY BEGIN TO WORK TO HELP THE 6,000 REFUGEES WHO WILL STILL BE IN THAILAND. BUT THE PROSPECTS AS SEEN FROM HERE ARE NOT ENCOURAGING. FAILING THE INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION, IT IS HOPED THE USG WILL HAVE MORE SPACES WITHIN THE AUTHORIZATION FOR 150,000 PAROLES FOR CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. MASTERS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RELIEF, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO08512
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750165-0141
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750562/aaaacdx.tel
Line Count: 180
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ITF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BANGKOK 8456
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <10 Jun 2003 by MorefiRH, INA>; RELEASED <30 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>; APPROVED <30 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND: THEIR PLIGHT AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF WORKING
TAGS: SREF, CGEN, CVIS, VN, CB, TH, UNHCR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006